

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A liquid composition for application to a food packaging film, said composition comprising:

(a) about 20% to about 47%, by weight, of a browning agent capable of undergoing a Maillard reaction with meat proteins;

(b) about 0.05% to about 2%, by weight, of a viscosity-modifying agent comprising a water-soluble cellulose ether;

(c) ~~0% about 1% to about 10%~~ 8%, by weight, ~~of a surfactant, a polyol, or mixture thereof~~;

(d) 0% to about 3%, by weight, of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt; and

(e) water,

said composition having a pH of about 2 to about 6.5 ~~and capable of transferring the browning agent of the composition from the food packaging film to a foodstuff packaged in the food packaging film.~~

2. (Original) The composition of claim 1 further comprising a flavoring agent.

3. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the composition comprises about 25% to about 40%, by weight, of the browning agent.

4. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the composition comprises about 30% to about 35%, by weight, of the browning agent.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the browning agent comprises a pyrolysis product from combustion of a sugar, a starch, or a mixture thereof.

7. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 6 wherein the browning agent comprises ~~aldehydes~~ an aldehyde.

8. (Currently amended) The composition of claim ~~6~~ 7 wherein the browning agent comprises hydroxyacetaldehyde.

9. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the browning agent comprises a pyrolysis product from combustion of wood or a cellulose.

10. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 2 wherein the flavoring agent comprises a phenol, an acid, or a mixture thereof.

11. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the composition further comprises caramel, beet extract, malt, bixin, annatto, or a mixture thereof.

12. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the composition comprises about 0.05% to about 1%, by weight, of the viscosity-modifying agent.

13. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the composition comprises about 0.10% to about 0.25%, by weight, of the viscosity-modifying agent.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein the viscosity-modifying agent is selected from the group consisting of ~~cellulose~~, methylcellulose, hydroxypropylcellulose, ~~starch, chitin, carrageenan, konjac, guar gum, xanthan gum, alginic acid and derivatives thereof, agar, pectin, gelatin, methylcellulose,~~ hydroxypropylmethylcellulose, hydroxypropylcellulose, ~~ethyl methylcellulose,~~ hydroxyethylcellulose, ~~ethyl hydroxyethylcellulose,~~ carboxymethylcellulose, carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose, and mixtures thereof.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ composition of claim 1 wherein the composition comprises about 2% to about 5% of ~~a surfactant, a polyol, or mixture thereof,~~ by weight of the composition.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently amended) The ~~method~~ composition of claim 1 wherein the ~~surfactant or glycol polyol~~ is selected from the group consisting of ~~calcium stearoyl lactylate, a diglyceride, dioctyl sodium sulfosuccinate, lecithin, a monoglyceride, polysorbate 60, polysorbate 65, polysorbate 80, sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium stearoyl lactylate, sorbitan monostearate,~~ propylene glycol, glycerol, and mixtures thereof.

24. (Currently amended) The composition of claim 1 wherein the browning agent comprises hydroxyacetaldehyde; the viscosity-modifying agent ~~is selected from the group consisting of xanthan gum, konjac gum,~~ comprises a methylcellulose, ~~and mixtures thereof;~~ and the ~~surfactant or glycol polyol~~ is selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, ~~dioctyl sulfosuccinate,~~ glycerol, and mixtures thereof.

25. (Original) The composition of claim 1 comprising about 0.5% to about 2.5%, by weight, of a salt.

26. (Original) The composition of claim 1 comprising about 1% to about 2%, by weight, of a salt.

27. (Original) The composition of claim 1 wherein the salt comprises sodium chloride.

28. (Original) The composition of claim 1 having a pH of about 4 to about 6.

29. (Original) A food packaging film having a composition of claim 1 applied to a food contact surface of the film.

30. (Original) The film of claim 29 wherein the composition is applied to the food contact surface of the film in an amount of about 0.1 to about 1.5 milligrams of the composition per square centimeter of the food contact surface.

31. (Original) A method of preparing and processing a foodstuff encased in a casing comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a casing suitable for a foodstuff;
- (b) applying a composition of claim 1 to a surface of the casing that contacts a foodstuff;
- (c) stuffing a foodstuff into the casing of step (b); and
- (d) heating the stuffed casing of step (c) at a sufficient temperature and for a sufficient time to process the foodstuff.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31 wherein heating step (d) is performed within four hours performing stuffing step (c).